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AUTHOR Martini, Mary
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ABSTRACT

This research summary reports on a 4-month long study of 30 children, ages 10-13, who live at the elementary boarding school on the island of 'Ua Pou, Marquesas Island, French Polynesia. Of the sample of 15 boys and 15 girls, 20 of the children are from a single small valley. Follow-up studies also were done of the families of these children. The study focuses on the concept of peer leaders who come into contact with large numbers of other children. Through observations and filming of the children, the study concludes that: (1) the children play large-group games almost every day after school; (2) the large group games emphasize group coordination and deemphasize the individual; (3) the individual does not stand alone; (4) there is an aversion to being controlled by others during play; (5) games rarely involve people or teams accumulating points, goals or prizes over others; (6) organization of games depends on the extreme cohesiveness of the valley groupings with a discernible hierarchy although it is not dictatorial; (7) group shaming is the usual form of punishment for failure to perform up to group expectations; and (8) there is a definite "in-group, out-group" feeling developed among students. These research findings are contrary to Levy's 1973 generalization concerning superficiality and distancing in Tahitian relationships. (EH)

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Mary Martini
Department of Human Resources
University of Hawaii at Manoa

Running Head: MARQUESAN CHILDREN'S GROUP SKILLS

Paper presented to the Culture and Learning Department, Kamehameha Schools/Bernice Pauahi Bishop Estate, Honolulu, HI.
Author's Address: Mary Martini, Department of Human Resources, University of Hawaii at Manoa, 2515 Campus Rd., Honolulu, HI 96822.

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Abstract

A large group of Marquesan children are systematically observed for a 4 month period as they live at boarding school in the main valley of their island, 'Ua Pou. This report describes their games, ways of organizing play and social group dynamics. The children organize themselves efficiently in large groups, and care for themselves, self-sufficiently without much adult help or supervision. The children display sophisticated group skills, but value autonomy as well. They voluntarily comply with close friends and relatives from their home valleys, forming tight groups of familiar friends. They participate in large group activities primarily when their valley-mates first join in. Marquesan children avoid play which places children in authority roles or which singles children out. They modify European games to strip them of their competitive pitting of one team against another, singling out individuals, or designating children as bosses. Group cooperation in the Marquesas differs from the uninvolved compliance described by Levy (1973) for Tahitians. Marquesan autonomy, on the other hand, differs from Western forms of individualism. Studying Marquesan children as they learn cultural beliefs about the relation of the individual to the group sheds light on both hierarchical Polynesian societal forms and on Western forms of individualism.

Marquesan Children's Group Organization Skills As Exhibited in Large-Group Play

In this report I describe how a group of school-aged Marquesan children interact among themselves. I describe the games they play, their attitudes toward rules, how they interact in small groups of friends, and how they interact one-to-one. The purpose of the study is to delineate regularities in children's social behavior and to relate these to Marquesan philosophies of the relationship between the individual and the group.

The study takes as a starting point some current descriptions of Polynesian social behavior. Robert Levy (1973) stresses that Tahitian children are taught that "relationships are contingent and interchangeable and must not be taken too seriously". He states:

> It is felt to be generally difficult and unsafe to establish close, trusting, committed, emotionally involved relationships with individuals--age peers, mates, children, political leaders. These relationships should be kept shallow, uninvolved, tentative. One should not care enough, or be engaged enough to be vulnerable if anything goes wrong. One should be able to get out, to detach oneself. The nature of a relationship is judged not by the abstract, naturally-

> given definition of the relationship, but practically and concretely by the actions of the people involved (Levy, 1973, p. 84).

Levy concludes that Tahitians, in contrast to Westerners, believe that people cannot truly understand each other's inner workings. Tahitian children, he observes, are not taught to attend to or describe their inner experiences, as are Western children. Instead, Tahitians are taught to minimize attention to inner experience, and to express inner workings in conventional terms. These expressions appear flat to Westerners trained to attend to and describe their inner experiences.

In this study I ask whether Marquesan children exhibit this tendency toward "shallow, uninvolved, tentative" relationships, or whether they engage in emotionally deep relationships based on some other non-Western premises.

Ethnographic background

The 30 children observed in this study are part of a group of 100 children who live at the elementary boarding school on the island of Ua Pou, Marquesas Islands, French Polynesia. The five small valleys on this island provide the first three years of French schooling; but then, children go to the major valley to complete their elementary education, starting at age 9 or 10. AT the boarding school, the 50 girls and 50 boys live in two separate groups in a dormitory arrangement, with an adult supervisor

for each group. The children return to their home valleys during vacations--a total of approximately four months per year. Due to this arrangement, most Ua Pou children spend a large part of their childhood living in sizable peer groups with limited contact with adults.

The 100 children comprise almost all 9 to 12 year old children from the smaller valleys on the island. (Another 100 children go to this school during the day, but live at home in this largest valley.) The boarders interact with each other and develop relationships with little adult direction or supervision. They have little contact with adults, who, at home, model how to establish and maintain relationships. The children interact extensively with other children from the same home valley. These children grew up together in a small, tightly-knit community and their families know each other well. Boarding school children also interact frequently with children from other valleys--many of whom are relatives. However, these children do not share early childhood experiences. Differences between the "primary," home valley, and "secondary" group ties are described below.

Methodology

A sample of 30 children (15 boys and 15 girls), ages 10 to 13, was selected. Twenty of these children are from a single small valley, where I later studied their families. In this way, I collected information about both the school and home relation-

ships of those 20 children. The twenty children include the 9 boys from that valley who attend the boarding school, and 11 of the 17 boarding school girls. Ten additional children were selected from other valleys. These children were observed to have the most extensive contact with others and were judged to be peer leaders. I chose to study leaders because they come into contact with large numbers of other children, expanding the scope of the study. I was also interested in Marquesan ways of leading groups.

I took pictures of all boarding school children, and learned as many names as I could. I observed and filmed children during unsupervised periods of play, one to three hours a day, six days a week, for a period of four months. I observed them three days a week in the school play yard after school hours; and three days a week as they played at or near the beach, on weekends, with supervisors present. I observed each of the 30 children for 10, 5-minute periods, in rotating order. I collected 320 behavior records, or about 50 minutes of written observation per child, as well as four hours of super-8, color film of children's activities and grouping. These form the data-base for the following descriptions.

Findings: Games and Rule Systems

The children play large-group games almost every day after school. These games involve 40 to 80 players. The children

organize these complex games very quickly and efficiently. The "prisoners game" (keu sari), for example, often involves more than 60 players, yet frequently is initiated and set into play in less than 3 minutes. Children decide to play, recruit players, form teams and choose a play space in this short time.

Marquesan large-group games emphasize group coordination and deemphasize the individual. Features of these games are:

1) Individual players are rarely "singled out" from the group. Children rarely stand alone. Neither do they wield personal power in these games nor are they individually penalized. The games rarely involve callers, captains or single "It"s, who stand alone and direct others' actions. Winning in these games rarely depends on individuals scoring points or goals.
2) The chosen games do not involve complex team coordination. Players do not play specialized roles nor do they follow complex strategies. Team members cooperate in simple ways, e.g. two players gang up to catch a third, but only rarely do more than two children coordinate their actions. The games, instead, consist of a number of one-to-one interactions which occur simultaneously, across team lines.
3) Whether children follow the rudimentary rules of the game or not depends on the dynamics of each particular one-to-one interaction. High status children frequently suspend the rules and are allowed to do so.

4) The goal of most of the observed games involves continuing the ongoing play, rather than having one team win, the other lose, or rather than accumulating points or prizes.

Rules and roles are flexible, and provide children a much leeway for working out specific one-to-one interactions while playing. Individual children play within the larger context of the group and are not set apart in specific positions or roles. In the following sections, I provide examples from systematic observations of these games, to support the above points.

The individual does not stand alone

Marquesan children play several group games, which in their American versions involve a single "It" who stands alone and acts against the group. Marquesans, however, play multiple "It" versions of these games. The two or more "It"s chase the rest of the group. Marquesan children play Doubles Tag (keu=game rio=lion doubles=doubles), in which two "It"s hold hands and chase other pairs. Children also play keu tikitaki, in which a team of chasers chase a team of fleers. Marquesan children occasionally play the single-It form of tag, but only within small groups of close friends.

Similarly, Marquesan children play Hide-and-Seek (keu pukana) in a multiple-It form. A seeker team stand within a home-base circle, close their eyes and count, while the others hide. At the end of the count, they search for the hiders. When a hider

is seen, the whole seeking team runs back to the home base. If they all make it back before the hider does, s/he is declared caught.

Similarly, Marquesan children play Dodge Ball (keu pehi popo) by having two teams alternately throw balls at each other, with the other team dodging. The throwers advance from one end of a field. They chase the dodgers and throw the ball(s) at them. The dodgers then gather the ball(s) and chase the first team. The teams advance and retreat up and down the field, until most (but not all) players from one team have been hit with the ball and have been eliminated. Again, only small, intimate groups of children play the American form of Dodge Ball, in which a single child stands inside a ring of throwers.

Games which involve eliminating single players (such as the team dodge ball described above) typically continue until two players, or a small group of players are left. The game is then considered finished. Children do not leave a single player standing alone in these games.

Early in my contact with these children, they asked me to teach them an American game. I taught them "red-light/greenlight," which, I realized later, involves singling out individuals. In this game, a caller stands at one end of the field while players line up at the other. The caller turns his or her back, yells "greenlight" and starts counting, while the others run toward the caller. At a certain count, the caller

yells "redlight", turns around, and tries to detect movement in the quickly stopped runners. S/he singles out and eliminates those who are moving, sending them back to the starting line. The first runner to reach the caller wins and becomes the new caller.

The Marquesan children said this game was "strange" (mea hui'ke). They politely played a demonstration game but then were not seen playing it again. Their reactions to the demonstration game are revealing.

a) First of all, no one wanted to be the caller. American children clamber to be the caller, which is the prize for winning the game. Some Marquesan children pushed others forward to take the position, saying "mo'i hakaika" ("don't be ashamed"). An unusually abrasive, assertive child who had asked me to teach them the game, finally accepted the position.

b) The caller counted, then whirled around and eliminated moving children, as in the American version. However, the Marquesan children acted extremely ashamed whenever they were caught and were sent back to the starting line (they looked down, glanced around, covered their faces and giggled).

c) The line of runners advanced very carefully and as a single group. Children checked each other's positions and stayed

together as a group. Individuals did not run ahead to try to tag the caller, as is common when American children play this game.

The children may have been bothered by a number of aspects of this situation. And they may have been anxious to perform correctly. However, on other occasions they appeared less bothered when they learned new songs and new group games from me and another foreigner (see below). They seemed most bothered by the processes of Redlight/Greenlight which single out players.

Aversion to being controlled by others during play

Marquesan children avoid singling out players and avoid being singled out. They also avoid or modify games which involve leaders telling others what to do. Most large-group games consist of many one-to-one interactions occurring simultaneously. Single chasers on one "side" chase fleers on the other side. The large group games rarely involve differentiated roles or team strategies. There are no captains or leaders, no front lines, rear guards or positions.

In the "Tic-toc game" (keu tictoc), members of one team chase and capture members of the other team. Captured players hold hands to form the hand of a clock, which revolves around a center "prison" post. Members of the fleer team then try to rescue the captured players by touching one person in the clock hand without getting caught themselves. When a fleer touches one person in the line, the whole line is freed from prison.

The "Prisoner's Game" (Keu), is similar to the American "Capture the Flag." The two teams have territories at each end of the field, with a line across the center of the field. Players try to touch each other's home-base markers without getting caught in the other team's territory. When one person touches the home-base, that person's team "wins" and the players return to their territories to start again. Captured players are put in jail, with a guard watching over them. They can be released if touched by a member of their own team.

This game is unusual in that it has complex procedures, stages of play, rules concerning territories and prisons, words said while capturing and freeing prisoners and rituals for getting from one stage of play to another. Most games have simpler structures. Most strategizing in Marquesan games occurs between individuals, rather than coordinated teams. For example: in the tictac game two players sometimes gang up to capture a third. In the prisoners game, sometimes one player runs into the enemy's territory to entice an opponent to chase him back into the bait's home territory where the bait's team member captures him. Western versions of these games involve complex group strategies for freeing prisoners or bluffing the other team, but such group organization is not seen in the Marquesan versions.

This generalization also holds for European games assimilated by these children. In volley ball, two friends often "set up"

shots for each other, and in soccer, two players pass back and forth, but aside from these dyadic cooperative efforts, little team organization was observed.

In the games described above children work out one-to-one interactions within the large group context. The individual is rarely singled out from the group, and remains free from group obligations or rules.

Marquesan children engage in a number of activities in which they follow a set routine, such as the steps of a clapping game, the moves of dance movements, or the coordinated hand motions of aparima.

This group organization, however, is inherent in the nature of the activity, and is not something worked out by individuals at the time of play. Some of these dynamics are seen more clearly in the discussion of rule-systems.

Rules

Significant characteristics of the rule-systems observed are:

1) Rules are seldom stated, reiterated or verbalized as such. Younger children are not taught the rules; they are told to watch. If they try to play without knowing the rules, they are pushed out with "a'i have" ("he doesn't know").
2) Rules are not "sacred" or adhered to for the sake of following rules (as described by Piaget [1969] for the rule-bound play of Western European children), nor are they par-

ticularly dependent on group judgment or opinion. Rather than "breaking" or "twisting" the rules, children seem to momentarily suspend the entire rule-system in accordance with the interpersonal dynamics of their immediate one-to-one interaction. For example, though a "tag" has (objectively) been made, the chaser and fleer may negotiate whether he has truly been "caught". And whether one is "caught" or not involves much more than the simple tagging fact.

In the "tictac game" of one team chasing another, this is complicated by the rule that a true catch necessitates the catcher putting both arms around the fleer. Because of this, there is much room for disagreement and negotiation. In "tag" games and the "prisoners" game", however, a one-handed tag suffices, and in these games, also, most tags are negotiated. For example, frequently, children are tagged "off guard". They jump in surprise, scowl and then laugh, and complain that they were not truly caught (a'i hemo). The catcher often laughs, looks the other way, and runs off to chase another child; and the "tagged" child goes free.

Similarly, children dominant in the peer hierarchy often claim they are not "caught", and "submissive" children look the other way. The factors involved in determining whether a tag means a catch or not, are not clear, but seem to concern only that chaser and that fleer in most cases.

Even in cases in which many children see a tag and join in yelling "you are caught" (ua hemo), the tagged child can get away with his freedom if he persists in denying the catch. Children were also seen to be tagged again and again, and in spite of unanimous public opinion, insisted they were not caught and hence remained free. A great deal of exagerrated anger - yelling, pointing, jumping up and down and scowling - sometimes accompanies these negotiations, but both parties periodically giggle or break into wide grins, indicating that the anger is mock. In this way, the negotiations themselves seem to become games of display. Also, children are rarely stigmatized even for flagrant suspensions of the rules, in the way that an American child, trying to break the rules, would be called a cheater, baby or bad sport, and might be excluded from further play.

In general, games have fairly specific rules, but these are neither sacred nor particularly dependent on group opinion. Rule systems are suspended for individuals, for idiosyncratic reasons, and depend on the dynamics or background of the particular one-to-one relationship. In a similar sense, the counter often cheats when using a counting-rhyme, starting the rhyme again and again until the last word falls on the desired person, and the dominant player in a two-person game often readjusts the rules to his benefit.

The general feeling-tone of the way the group reacts to the individual rule-suspension is that beyond the enjoyment and dis-

play of yelling at the infractor, it is not that important to maintain the rules, and the individual should be allowed his way if he persists so dramatically.

The fact that higher-level, group rules can be overridden by the personal will and the dynamics of each interpersonal relationship follows a Marquesan theme of respecting the ultimate autonomy of the individual from group restraints. Marquesans pride themselves with conforming to the group as an act or mature willfulness, and claim they cooperate only when they willfully want to (see Kirkpatrick, 1983).

Winning and Losing

Marquesan children's games rarely involve people or teams accumulating points, goals or prizes over others. Marquesan children do not focus on (or even notice in most cases) winning or losing. The Marquesan word for losing, ua pa'o, has the sense of "to be finished", as in the game is finished". The word for winning, kanie, was borrowed from the French, gagne, and is not rooted in Marquesan concepts of competition similar to Western notions. One to one competition, with a formalized display of dominance of one over the other, occurs rarely. Children appear to avoid clear statements of winners or losers.

In most of the games described above, the end of a game is marked not by displays of a winner and loser, but simply by the

two teams changing roles. The purpose of the game seems to be "to get to the end in order to change roles," rather than for one person to win, the other to lose.

In other games, the purpose is to keep a good, ongoing process going as long as possible. For example, in keu pehi hitoro, the purpose is to keep the volley of lemons going for a long time; in most marbles games, the purpose is to continue to hit the opponent's marble and gain another turn; in a group, coconut-juggling game, the purpose is to keep the coconuts passing around a circle without dropping one.

This continuation motivation can be clearly seen in the preferred form of marbles played by these children. Several forms of marbles are known and were explained to me as such:

1) keu poro (marbles game), is the simplest form. One child throws out his marble, the other tries to hit it. If he succeeds, he takes another turn, and continues until he misses; often, he counts his number of successes. When he misses, the first child takes his turn. This continues indefinitely, with the game wandering all over the available play area. No marbles are won or lost.
2) Keu V (the V game) and keu O (the O game). In these games, a triangle or circle is drawn in the sand and the players put a decided number of marbles in. Each player shoots toward the triangle; if he taps a marble out, he

wins it and takes another turn. If his shooter remains within the triangle, he loses it and is eliminated from the game.

3) keu keke'e vaevae moa (section of the chicken foot game). In this game, a chicken foot is drawn in the sand. Players put a decided number of marbles in each section. A player then shoots; if the shooter touches any marble in a section, he wins all others in that section.

Though these forms seem to be known by many children, the continuous, non-winning form (keu poro), is almost exclusively played. On the occasions I observed the V or O game, the marbles which were won were returned to their owners at the end of the game. I should note that there is no scarcity of marbles on the island, since certain tree berries make excellent marbles.

"Continuing a good thing" as the purpose or goal of a game is seen in the numerous volleying games played among these children. Children volley lemons, stones, wadded paper balls and balls, often counting their successful volleys. In addition, they play group juggling games, in which they try to keep a large number of coconuts or lemons passing around a circle or players.

It was interesting to observe the reaction of a group of girls to rugby, a game with definite goals and a scoring system. The male supervisor taught the girls this game, explaining the goal system, and the toss-up-and-scramble ritual for restarting

play after a goal has been scored. The girls played with this system for a while, gaining points and restarting play, but then the game evolved into something quite different - into a game in which members of each team tried to pass the ball a large number of times among themselves, avoiding interception by the other team. They began counting as they passed, and ten became the magic number, at which point they would restart the play, using the rugby, toss-up-and-scramble method. They converted rugby from a competitive, win and lose, point counting game, to a cooperative group game, with no clear winners or losers.

Volley ball and soccer are the only group games involving winning and losing points observed among these children. These are also the games of the most apparent European origin. These games are played in more formal set-ups and are often monopolized by the adolescents of the group. In this way, there are fairly consistent volley ball and soccer teams. Scoring goals in soccer seems to be very important. Winning and losing points may be equally as important in volley ball, but there is the additional factor that the losing team is replaced by another team, and one's play is interrupted.

In attempting to relate the forms of games played by a group with other aspects of their interaction behavior, one must keep in mind that games are often passed down or assimilated in a relatively intact form, so that aspects may remain which bear

little resemblance to normal or everyday interaction patterns or rules. On the other hand, I believe that if a game presents aspects which are very foreign to the children's experience or beliefs, that they will de-emphasize these or modify these aspects. This seems to be the case, for example, with their preference for multiple-It forms of games, though the single-It forms exist, and for their modifications of Western competitive games into cooperative forms.

How children organize large group play

One of the most striking characteristics of these children is their ability to organize themselves in very large groups. I have already mentioned the efficiency with which they organize the "prisoners game", which sometimes involves 80 to 90 players. For weeks I was amazed at how quickly and subtly they organize these games. I decided to watch this process carefully because of its efficiency, and also because several aspects of the way they organize large group play seem to differ greatly from how American and Western European children initiate large group games.

I discovered the following process for initiating the "prisoners game" or <u>keu pari</u>:

- Active individuals or leaders from one or two valleys start talking about <u>keu pari</u>;
- they go to leaders from other valleys, calling "keu pari".

- This group solicits children who seem to be typical initiators for that game (viz. MT, MN or ATO).
- The typical initiators call out "keu pari" and indicate where to play.
- Other members of the valley groupings follow their leaders to one end of the field or the other.
- One or two leaders then count up the teams and even them out by excluding or recruiting players.

An example of this is provided from behavior record #81:

- AT (leader from the valley of Hohoi) yells "keu pari" to MT (a leader from Hakatao valley and fastest girl runner).
- MT continues to play a checkers-like game, and does not respond.
- AT then goes over to a stone game played by RR and AV (active leaders from Hakamaii valley). She joins the Hakamaii girls watching and kibbutzing the game.
- MN (a central leader from Hakahetau valley) walks up and says "keu pari";
- FF asks "where"?.
- MN and AT (both leaders) talk about "keu pari".
- RS (a leader from Hakatao valley) joins them.
- MN, AT, RS and TAH then go back to MT, who ignored the first call, and say "keu pari".

- MT has just finished her game. She gets up, points to the volley ball court and yells "keu pari".
- Many girls then leave the stone games they had been watching, and join in.
- AV and RR (leaders from Hakamai'i) join in, and several Hakamaii girls follow.
- RS, MT, MN and RR (leaders from different valleys) count up the teams, exchange some players, and the game starts. This has taken about 5 minutes.

Several aspects of large group organization are made clear by this process.

1) The efficiency of organization depends on the extreme cohesiveness of the valley groupings. This clustering process creates the impression of going from no organization to total organization in a very short time.
2) A fairly well-established influence hierarchy exists, and is indicated by who gets recruited to initiate the games.
3) These leaders or active individuals, though, do not dominate or single-handedly order others around. They do not actively direct, but rather serve as a nuclear group of leaders around which others group or crystallize. They also serve in evening out these groups, once formed.
4) This process of team formation avoids singling out individuals and spelling-out dominance hierarchies which occur in

the system of choosing teams used by American children. In the American system, captains are chosen who then select players, one by one, in an alternating fashion. The rank of each player is indicated by the order in which s/he is selected, and the competence hierarchy is made clear.

Social Hierarchies:

Marquesan children do not state nor call attention to an explicit dominance hierarchy, but it does exist. Dominance manifests itself in terms of "who can replace whom" in a game in process, and in terms of "who can claim they are not tagged in tag games". In the following example, TEM and PR (of about equal status) jockey for position. UM is clearly higher than both, and KH is clearly lower than both:

- TEM runs onto the volley ball court and tries to take the place of PR. PR refuses and TEM goes to sit on the sidelines.
- UM then runs in and takes PR's place.
- PR starts over to KH's place.
- At the same moment, TEM jumps up and runs to KH's place, and KH steps aside, ceding his position.
- PR arrives and stands there a few seconds, trying to claim the place, but then leaves and sits on the sidelines.

Also:

- RR (dominant girl from Hakamai'i) comes down from the dormitory after the others. She walks onto the volley ball court and replaces TT.
- TT (high in the hierarchy) then takes ZZ's place, (ZZ is younger and weaker) who goes to sit on the sideline.

Children are aware of who is stronger than whom and who can replace whom, and the changes are usually uncontested. Status equals, however, often engage in extended jokeying for position.

Group shaming:

The predominant form of interaction among Marquesan children in large groups - i.e. during games of volleyball, keu pari, or keu tictac, is loud mocking, teasing, shaming and displaying mock anger toward each other. These interactions play on children's abhorance in being singled out. The children play at these uncomfortable situations. In loud play, a child may be singled out for the smallest mistake - for missing a serve, hitting the ball out of bounds, stumbling, bumping into another, or not seeing the ball come toward him. Other children point, laugh or feign anger at his mistake.

Ways of mocking others differ between younger and older children, and between boys and girls. Basically, however, when a child makes a mistake, the group calls loud attention to it. Being socially competent for a Marquesan child involves knowing how to stand up to this shaming. Children who react

appropriately laugh along with the others, admit incompetence, laugh at themselves, but do not lose their composure, dignity or self-esteem. The most active, leader-type individuals have developed very funny ways of mocking themselves. Sometimes they announce and laugh at their mistakes before others have noticed even noticed them, "beating the others to the punch".

Going along with the teasing, and mocking oneself seems to put the individual more solidly into contact with the group. Children who react inappropriately, get angry at the teasing, look as if they feel extremely ashamed and uncomfortable, and, in particular, cry about being unfairly singled out. These actions are considered babyish and alienate the individual from the group. The child who becomes "truly" angry (e.g., throws a rock, aimed to hit) is looked at by others with disgust and is then ignored.

Crying indicates that the social teasing has become too much for that child. Others back off and stop the teasing, but donot show pity toward the child. They seem uncomfortable and dis-attend to the crying child. They try to continue the activity, frequently glance at him, but offer no comfort. If the child continues to cry for a long time, the group will punish the child.

In general, children seem to cry to comfort themselves. But crying does not elicit group pity or help the way it may in a

group of American children. In the Marquesas, one's best friend may passively stand by while a child cries, but s/he offers no active support. Crying isolates children from the group, rather than eliciting group bonding.

Group shaming produces extreme social awareness. Each child is aware of his or her and everyone else's moves and mismoves. Each child is quick to recognize and mock the slightest mistake.

Shaming may be a process by which the strength of a person's desire to remain in the group is tested, i.e., Is s/he willing to put up with a great deal of mocking and degradation in order to be part of the group? In group shaming, the processes most feared and avoided in normal interaction, (i.e., singling out the individual and attacking him or her) are stressed, exaggerated, and played with. This may represent a symbolic working-through of these fears. This shaming may also be a form of training for what children see as the greatest dangers of interpersonal relating--that others will mock them, set them apart, or become angry at them.

Among younger children, and especially among boys, mocking is very exaggerated, vocal and pretend. Children point, scream, laugh, scowl, push, hit, kick, sit on, spit at, throw stones at and pull the hair of others who make the slightest mistake. Children laugh and touch each other a great deal in this process. The victim can respond by laughing and reciprocating.

Among older, adolescent boys, aggression sometimes overshadows the funny aspects, and the boundaries between mock and real anger blur. Among adolescent girls, and in mixed adolescent groups, shaming is more subtle. Girls scowl or mutter under their breathes. These may be the only indications that others have noticed a mistake. These signs are enough to make a player feel uncomfortable and self-conscious, but not enough to warrant a loud, self-reassuring defense. Due to this, games among adolescent girls involve greater social tension.

Small-group Organization and Friendship:

The large group of boarding school children consists of several subgroups of same-sex children who grew up together in the same valley. The same-sex valley groupings are made up of smaller friendship groupings, consisting of children who grew up together in the same area or neighborhood in that valley. The valley groupings are particularly stable for pre-adolescent children.

Adolescents, on the other hand, tend to form same-age groups with members from several different valleys. For example, the 6 or 7 largest girls, from 5 different valleys frequently sit together, talking to the young-adult, female "surveillant" (supervisor). These girls form the core of the girls' volley ball team. Similarly, 6 or 7 adolescent boys from different valleys, often sit and talk under a particular tree and talk, and

form the core of the soccer and volley ball teams. These boys sometimes work as a group for the school, unloading school goods from incoming ships, and doing light construction or clearing.

Members of the small valley groups sit together, talk, gossip and watch ongoing events. In the play-yard, friends sit on the same bench; in the boathouses, in the same boat; near the sea, on the same palm-fronds or logs. Small groups of girls comb each other's hair, delouse each other, share combs, lean against each other, lie in each other's laps, share food, talk and gossip. Small groups of boys are also very physically close, share food, and tell stories and gossip.

Gossiping seems to be a major activity of these groups. Children carefully comment on every passerby, and discuss qualities and faults of other children in games they are watching. Story-telling, or very detailed, accurate recounting of past social events, is also a major activity.

Within those groups, friendship pairings can be seen by the children who are most often together, who choose each other for one-to-one games, and who are physically very close.

Children nurture each other in these small groups. They share food and letters from home, groom each other, sit close, and rest together, like a family.

Active individuals within these groups tend to be very vocal, funny, and good at mocking themselves and others. They are also

the most mobile members, in terms of their abilities to join and make contact with several valley groups, not just their own. In this way, they form links between the groups. Active individuals also tend to be the most vocal gossipers and the best story-tellers. They hold high positions in the replacement hierarchy, and can replace others in volley ball or soccer.

Among girls, the active individuals (whom I have been calling "leaders") are groomed and deloused more frequently and for longer periods than the others. These focal individuals influence others' behaviors in subtle, non-assertive ways. They unobtrusively initiate games, neither demanding nor requesting following until a structure of participation is well-assured, e.g. after a number of active children from different valleys have agreed to play. They are then immediately joined by most of their own valley grouping.

Belonging: Definitions of "in" and "out"

I have already mentioned that the small, valley groupings spend a lot of time sitting together, commenting on what is going on, watching people, gossiping, and recounting past incidents. Talk in these groups is almost always social, and deals with minute details of people's behavior, dress, family background and origin. Most of this gossip and commentary concerns "outsiders", specifically, such as foreigners and adults.

At the sea, the boarding school children play among others from the community, and they watch and talk about these town

children extensively. Similarly, the town children consider this to be their beach, and the boarding school children are seen as intruders.

In the play-yard at school, there are few outsiders to talk about, so gossip about relative outsiders. Children in one valley group talk about children in another. Gossiping may serve as the major mechanism for defining who is <u>not</u> in a particular group. Outsiders are talked about; insiders do not receive much verbal attention, even when they are not part of the immediate, gossiping group.

Other behaviors serve in defining outsiders. An outsider who "joins" a valley group will assume a position or posture different from others in the group, signaling that s/he does not really belong. For example, the outsider remains standing, next to group members who sit; or s/he stands behind or to the side of the valley group, or sits down while group members stand. If an outsider assumes s/he belongs by trying to blend in, group members may actively try to position her "out". The members may turn in toward themselves, or split into two groups, leaving the outsider near the periphery. In the boathouses, outsiders often sit on the deck of a dry-docked boat, while the in-group sits in the cockpit.

Also, when an outsider approaches a group, group members watch the outsider and sometimes stop their conversations or

shift to more public topics. These convey messages to the outsider and to all watching about the degree to which this person belongs in that group. Marquesan children learn, early on, to read these subtle cues.

Definite outsiders, especially children who do not belong, but who are constantly present (e.g. town children at the sea), may be reacted to in extreme ways. For example, TAM is a 6-year-old who, because her valley has no school, came to live at the boarding school when she was much younger than any other child there. The 9 to 13 year old boarding school girls constantly teased, taunted, mocked and treated TAM roughly. This contrasts with the loving ways these girls normally treat young children in their home valleys. The girls told me they did not like TAM because she was "too little", unable to do things, and was a cry-baby. TAM suffered in this situation for about 4 months, until one night she was treated very roughly and the school master and her parents withdrew her from school.

I heard about this and asked the older girls what had happened. One of the older girls admitted, "We beat her up". When I asked why, she paused a long time and finally said, "because she had lice and gave them to the rest of us". Other girls added that TAM was always crying for her family and made the children feel homesick and annoyed. Others added that she acted like a baby and cried when teased. TAM represented, to the girls, a

social incompetent who was still highly dependent on her family. She seemed to elicit uncomfortable dependency wishes in the older girls, who were proud of their abilities to support themselves away from their families, and to stand up to group teasing. TAM did not belong; she was an anomaly whose crying constantly called into question the "rightness" of the girls' social system.

Another incident exemplifies children's extreme reactions to an outsider. One Saturday a small boy from the town tried to fly a kite he had made on the soccer field where adolescent boarding school boys were playing. A group of the boarding school boys stoned the kite until it fell and then ripped it apart, laughing. The village boy squatted, cried, clutched his broken materials, but then eventually stood up and left.

In summary, in the Marquesan peer groups, children defined what it meant to be "out" more clearly than they explicated what it meant to be "in." [Western children, in contrast, talk incessantly of who belongs in a group and why, who is friends with whom, and what are the defining characteristics of their group]. Belonging in Marquesan children's peer groups is defined by the absence of signs of exclusion. A child knows s/he belongs when she is not gossiped about, watched, or turned away from when s/he approaches. Also, group members do not drop or shift the topic of conversation when s/he arrives.

In addition, group members are said to be "used to" ("hani") each other in the deep way that family members are accustomed to

each other's ways. They grew up together, are from the same valley, live nearby and are sometimes kin. Younger children in a valley grouping were "raised" by some of the older members. Children in the same-valley grouping nurture each other. Relationships are based on mutual-trust and predictability. Friends do not need to monitor and comment on each other's moves. Children in these group mock each other less and test the relationships less. They elect to cooperate with each other and quickly join in on games and songs.

Dyadic relationships and one-to-one interactions:

Two kinds of dyadic relationships were observed: 1) very long-term, time-tested friendships, and; 2) more temporary, experimental pairings. The first were characterized by nurturing, unspoken solidarity. In newer, experimental relationships, children constantly tested the strength of each other's commitments. For example, a child gives subtle eye-brow raises to invite a new friend to play. These cues would only be seen by someone who was carefully watching and who really wanted to play. If the new friend accepts the invitation, this indicates high commitment. If s/he doesn't, the first child has not risked making an overt invitation which was rejected.

I observed many "wars of disattention", in which one child disattends to his ongoing activity with a new friend. He acts disinterested. He ignores his new friend, watches another game,

talks to someone else, or chases someone else's ball. The new friend looks uncomfortable and disappointed, watches him and waits for him to return. Then, however, as soon as the first child returns, the new friend begins to feign disinterest. This continues until the interaction breaks off, or until they both agree to play with each other.

Even close friends occasionally test the limits of each other's tolerance for pain or teasing. For example, during chase games, one friend catches another, pulls her around by her hair, kicks, knees, tickles, prods or hits her, while watching her reaction. The caught child vacillates between expressing real and pretend anger. They then change roles, and often continue this game for long periods.

Summary:

This analysis of games Marquesan children play indicates:

- children prefer and efficiently organize large group games;
- they prefer "mass action" games in which everyone does a variant of the same actions;
- they prefer egalitarian games in which there are few leaders, callers or bosses, and in which individuals are not singled out;
- Marquesan children avoid games which involve complex group strategies, the differentiation of roles and central directing of action;

- they do not engage in competitive winning or losing in which dominance is explicated; but rather, aim to continue the smooth group action as long as possible.
- they modify European games to deemphasize winning, losing and singling out individuals;
- they do not spend time devising or adhering to sacred rules the way American and Western European elementary school children do.

These observations indicate that although Marquesan children coordinate in large group effort, they do so without bossy leaders, commanders, or people who actively direct others' about. Marquesan children avoid direct pressure to comply to group rules or constraints. They prefer to voluntarily coordinate their actions, without a sense of being obligated to go along with the group.

Group coordination is achieved differently in the Marquesas. Children voluntarily cooperate with close friends and relatives from the same home valley. They belong to this valley grouping in an unstated, intimate way. They voluntarily join in games whenever important children from their valley begin to play. The children draw a distinction between being coerced or pressured into following the group and willingly following. Like their parents they do not believe people should blindly follow others.

The analysis of large-group dynamics indicates that most social rules and patterns of interaction remain unspecified.

Social hierarchies are not spelled-out in blatant ways the way they are when Western children choose team members one-by-one, from best to weakest athlete.

Group organization in the Marquesas does not consist of leader children directing others. Instead, children coordinate group effort by crystallizing their support around well-respected valley familiars.

Although social hierarchies and role definitions are not spelled-out, they seem to exist. For example, there are "replacement hierarchies" by which some children can replace others in games. Active, focal individuals are also apparent and seem to serve specific functions. There are also specific routes for initiating activities.

Some of the large-group processes, e.g. social mocking, constant social awareness, and testing of the intent of others - may be indicative of social tension accompanying the lack of specificity in social interaction rules. In large, heterogeneous groups, mocking may serve a constant "initiation process" function, a test of one's desire to remain part of the group.

In the smaller, valley groupings, definitions for who is "out" are clearer than criteria for who is "in". The cohesive valley groups are organized around givens, such as familiarity, and growing up together. These groups are defined through defining others as out, and treating them as such.

Friendships and strong dyadic relationships follow this pattern. The Marquesan child seems to be close to the people he trusts, and trust seems to be based more on familiarity and experienced predictability than on ideological understanding or abstract identification among the individuals. Close friends are chosen from his valley group, and often represent neighbors or kin. Close friends do not test their relationship as much and satisfy each other's basic needs. The more "uncertain" or "unfamiliar" a friendship, the more the friends test each other's commitment. To test the other's commitment, children send only subtle invitations to play, and engage in "wars of disattention" and the rough chase and fight games.

Contrary to Levy's (1973) generalization concerning superficiality and distancing in Tahitian relationships, relationships among these children seem to be very emotionally involved. The nature of this involvement, however, is an extension of familial or maternal bonds. Friendship ties involve unquestioning acceptance and unspoken, unspecified agreements.

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